

NEWS ANALYSIS 1-1803  
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CLOUDS LIFTING OVER LEBANON

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN TAKES A LOOK AT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON.

VOICE: NINETEEN MONTHS AND SOME FIFTY CEASE-FIRES AFTER LEBANON'S BLOODIEST CIVIL WAR STARTED, IT SEEKS TO BE MOVING TO A REAL END WITH A NEW ERA DAWNING FOR THE LONG-SUFFERING LEBANESE POPULATION. SYRIAN TROOPS OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE HAVE NOW OCCUPIED THE CENTER OF BEIRUT AND ARE MOVING--ALONG WITH OTHER UNITS FROM LEBANON'S ARAB NEIGHBORS--INTO OTHER AREAS OF THE DEVASTATED COUNTRY. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE PEACE-KEEPING UNITS ARE MOVING INTO MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN AREAS PEACEFULLY. THE CIVILIAN INHABITANTS OF THOSE AREAS ARE RECEIVING THE PEACE UNITS WITH SIGNS OF EVIDENT RELIEF THAT THEIR SEEINGLY ENDLESS NIGHTMARE IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE.

THE IMPROVED PANORAMA IN LEBANON IS THE RESULT OF LAST MONTH'S ARAB SUMMIT MEETINGS IN RIYADH AND CAIRO, WHICH CREATED THE THIRTY-THOUSAND MAN PEACE-KEEPING FORCE. WHILE MOST OF THAT FORCE IS DOMINATED BY HEAVILY-EQUIPPED SYRIAN UNITS, IT WILL ALSO INCLUDE CONTINGENTS FROM SAUDI ARABIA, THE SUDAN, YEMEN, SOUTHERN YEMEN, LIBYA AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. SOME OF THESE UNITS REPORTEDLY ARE THERE. OTHERS ARE ON THE WAY. THE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IS UNDER THE COMMAND OF A LEBANESE MOSLEM OFFICER, DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS OF LEBANON.

BUT AS AN UNEASY PEACE SEEKS TO BE SETTLING OVER LEBANON, THE COUNTRY AND ITS PRESIDENT, MISTER SARKIS, FACE STAGGERING PROBLEMS. IN THE AFTERMATH OF A CIVIL CONFLICT THAT COST SOME FORTY THOUSAND LIVES--MOSTLY CIVILIANS--THE GRIEF FELT BY THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS MUST BE OVERPOWERING. BUT THOSE HUMAN CONSIDERATIONS

ASIDE, LEBANON'S DEVASTATION MUST BE REPAIRED. ITS ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE ARE IN SHAMBLES. LEBANON'S BANKING INDUSTRY WHICH, FOR MANY YEARS SERVED AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD AND THE ARAB WORLD IS SHATTERED. THE JOB OF REBUILDING RUINED HOMES, BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS AND INDUSTRIES WILL COST MANY THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

TWO MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS FACE THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT. ONE IS THE VOLATILE ISSUE OF DISARMING THE MILITANT MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN Factions. THE MAJOR BURDEN OF THIS JOB WILL FALL TO THE ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WHICH IS GIVING EVERY INDICATION THAT IT IS MOVING CAREFULLY ON THIS. THE OTHER ISSUE THAT THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT MUST FACE IS THE FATE OF SOME HALF-MILLION PALESTINIANS STILL LIVING IN LEBANON.

IN ANY CASE, THE PEACEFUL DEPLOYMENT OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN. PRESIDENT SARKIS SOME DAYS AGO, INDICATED THIS WHEN HE SAID LEBANON HAS HAD "ENOUGH OF BLOODSHED AND RUIN." IN THAT SPEECH, MISTER SARKIS ALSO CALLED FOR THE RULE OF WHAT HE TERMED "REASON AND LOVE" AND ADDED "THE DAYS WE ARE LIVING THROUGH ARE A HISTORIC AND CRUCIAL PHASE NOT ONLY FOR LEBANON BUT ALSO FOR THIS REGION OF THE WORLD."

HOW EFFECTIVE THAT MESSAGE OF REASON IS UNDOUBTEDLY WILL DETERMINE THE HELP THAT LEBANON AND ITS PEOPLE CAN EXPECT FROM MEN OF GOOD WILL EVERYWHERE--AND PARTICULARLY FROM ITS NEIGHBORS SO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN MAKING THE PRECARIOUS PEACE MORE PERMANENT.